



The D.C. War Memorial, nestled in a grove of trees in West Potomac Park



Graffiato's handmade spaghetti with olive oil-poached tomatoes



The glass-topped Kogod courtyard in the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery



A cheeky treat courtesy of the Fojol Bros. Indian food truck

A NEW CULINARY CAPITAL

Creative cooking is quickly becoming the star attraction in **Washington, D.C.** Use this guide to take a bite out of the city's vibrant food scene—and that's an executive order.



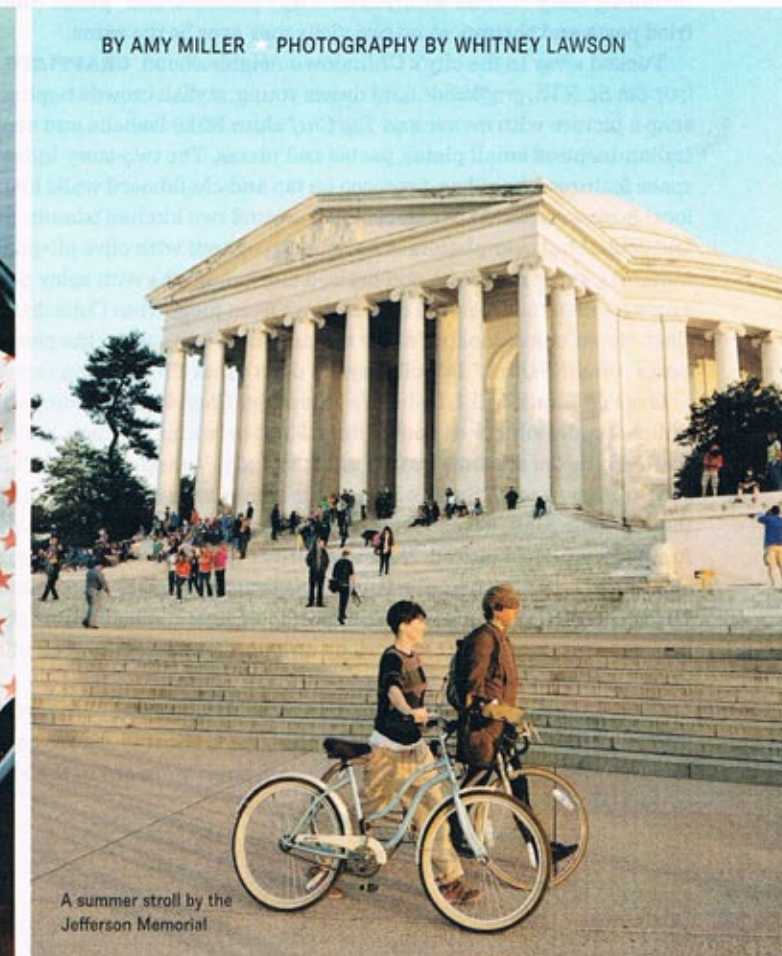
Sidewalk seating outside Jaleo restaurant in the bustling Penn Quarter



Colorful brownstones lining the streets of Capitol Hill



BBQ pulled pork and traditional cheese slices at We, The Pizza



A summer stroll by the Jefferson Memorial

BY AMY MILLER • PHOTOGRAPHY BY WHITNEY LAWSON

If your last visit to D.C. included the words “field” and “trip,” you might be surprised to see how trendy the town’s dining scene has become. Celebrity chefs have set up spots all over the district; emerging gourmands—from food-truck drivers to neighborhood restaurant owners—are putting their distinct regional spin on farm-to-table menus; and once-homogenous ethnic areas are filled with foodies ready to travel via their taste buds. Here are four great reasons to take another taste of the nation’s capital this summer. Who knows—you might even be seated next to the first family!

1 All-star chefs top the menu.

The most prolific restaurateur in town is James Beard Award-winning chef José Andrés, who has opened seven trailblazing eateries in 11 years—including Mediterranean **ZAYTINYA** (701 9th St. N.W., zaytinya.com), a Rachael favorite; pop-up spot **AMERICA EATS TAVERN** (405 8th St. N.W., americaeatstavern.com); and the six-seat, avant-garde **MINIBAR BY JOSÉ ANDRÉS** (405 8th St. N.W., 2nd floor), possibly the most difficult reservation to score in the city. Reopened in April after a complete renovation, his **JALEO** (480 7th St. N.W., jaleo.com) is once again the city’s hot destination for tapas. The Penn Quarter restaurant coaxes crowds with a balance of formal refinement, Spanish comfort food and down-to-earth prices—most items are below \$15. Variety is the key here: The menu boasts more than 70 options, including spicy chorizo wrapped in crispy potatoes, and “paella” made with fried pasta and shrimp, so no two visits may ever be the same.

Tucked away in the city’s Chinatown neighborhood, **GRAFFIATO** (707 6th St. N.W., graffiatodc.com) draws young, stylish crowds hoping to snap a picture with owner and *Top Chef* alum Mike Isabella and sample his Italian-inspired small plates, pastas and pizzas. The two-story industrial space features a ham bar, prosecco on tap and chalkboard walls listing local farm sources. At bar stools lined around two kitchen islands, guests and cooks chat over platters of hand-cut spaghetti with olive oil-poached tomatoes, garlic and basil, and braised chicken thighs with spicy pepperoni sauce—a dish that received rave reviews from judge Tom Colicchio on *Top Chef*. “Even before looking at the menu, diners will ask for the pepperoni sauce from the show,” Isabella says. “I don’t think I’ll ever stop serving it.”

Over on Capitol Hill, Isabella’s fellow *Top Chef All-Stars* competitor Spike Mendelsohn does double duty. First he whips up juicy, hand-crafted burgers at **GOOD STUFF EATERY** (303 Pennsylvania Ave. S.E., goodstuffeatery.com). Spike’s Sunnyside comes with a fried egg and bacon; the Michelle Melt, a free-range turkey burger, honors the health-minded first lady, who has visited. Next door, fresh-from-the-oven slices are served at his **WE, THE PIZZA** parlor (305 Pennsylvania Ave. S.E., wethepizza.com). Order the BBQ pie, topped with a mound of slow-roasted pulled pork, barbecue sauce, cheddar and crispy onions. Don’t forget to grab one of the house-made sodas for the road.

“Everyone thinks of D.C. as being the political capital of the world, but it is so much more than that,” Andrés says. “New chefs are coming to open burger joints and high-end restaurants, so we are in the right place at the right time.”



1. Lunch outside We, The Pizza 2. The Farmhouse burger at Good Stuff Eatery 3. Graffiato's one-of-a-kind graffiti wall art 4. Daily offerings at We, The Pizza 5. A toast to Graffiato's bloody marys with olives and mozzarella 6. Turkish Delight—walnut ice cream, yogurt mousse and orange-caramel sauce—at Zaytinya

